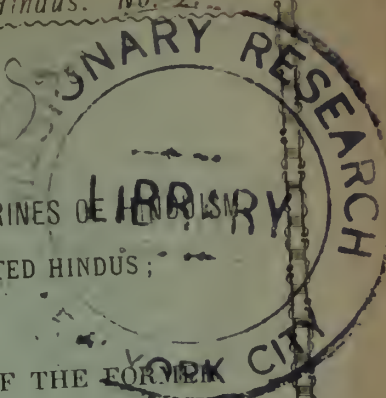


Papers for Thoughtful Hindus. No. 2.

Nilakantha

THE
SUPPOSED AND REAL DOCTRINES OF
AS HELD BY EDUCATED HINDUS;
WITH
THE TRUE SOURCE OF THE



COMPILED FROM THE LECTURES OF
(THE REV. NEHEMIAH (NILAKANTH) GOREII.)

THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY FOR INDIA:
LONDON AND MADRAS.

1898.

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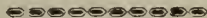
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Prefatory Note.

THE Lectures from which most of the following extracts are made were originally delivered in Calcutta in 1881-2, and printed in the series of "Occasional Papers," published by the Oxford Mission, Calcutta, under the title of "Theism and Christianity." This edition has been out of print for some time. The author republished them, with many changes, under the title, "The Existence of Brahmoism itself a Proof of the Divine Origin of Christianity."*

The main object of the lectures is explained by the second title; but they may also serve another end. There are many educated Hindus who suppose that their enlightened beliefs are to be found in Hinduism, especially in its earlier books. This is shown to be contrary to fact. Hinduism is thus disproved.

Some extracts have also been taken from a lecture delivered at Mhow, "On the Duty of Accepting the True Religion."†

This selection is issued in a cheap form to give the principal points in the lectures a wider circulation. Readers are, recommended to obtain the complete editions.

J. M.

* Published by the North India Tract Society, Allahabad. Price 2 As.

† Published by the same Society. Price 1 Anna.

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INTRODUCTION.

THOSE truths of religion which make up what is called Natural Religion are so natural, so simple, and appear so self-evident when men once learn them from revelation, that though it is absolutely certain, as I have shown in these lectures, that men cannot discover them by reason, yet having learned them from revelation many of them begin to think that they can be known by reason.

They think that every one must see them, that no one can help seeing them. Then they begin to think that revelation is not necessary, and begin to disbelieve it, and at last give it up.

Now educated Indian gentlemen, I am sorry to say, are falling into the same mistake. The light of Christianity has been shining in India through various means for many years, and this light, having reached them through various channels, has given to educated Indians purer and truer notions of religious truth, and they too think that these notions can be acquired by reason, and that revelation is not necessary. They have lost their faith in their old religions, and yet are not willing to accept Christianity. They think that they can believe the truths of Natural Religion only, which they think they have learned through reason, and that these are enough for them. There is a section of educated Indians who have formally and more definitely adopted a form of Natural Religion to which they have given the name of "Brahmoism", which they also call "Theism." And now men by constantly hearing that name have actually come to think that "Brahmoism" is a real independent religion, deserving to be ranked among the religions of the world, whereas, apart from Christianity, Brahmoism or Theism is nothing at all. It is a mere reflec-

tion of Christianity, a defective, incomplete reflection. Before Christianity came here, it was not known to any body, and wherever Christianity is not known, there Brahmoism or Theism is never known. But all educated Indians are now labouring under the delusion that the truths of Natural Religion can be known by reason, and that revelation is not necessary.

In the case of educated Hindus there is an additional cause of this delusion. In the religious books of the Hindus there are sentiments about God, about supreme devotion to Him, and about various virtues, which might easily be mistaken for Christian.

But this must also be clearly understood, that though the good sentiments in the religious books of Hindus may appear quite Christian or Theistic to a Christian or a Theist, yet in the minds of the Hindus themselves they are neither Christian nor Theistic. For first, they are not conceived by the Hindus exactly as they are conceived by Christians or Theists; not in so full and true a sense,—and secondly, in their minds they are mixed with all the gross errors which their religion teaches. Some examples of this will be found in these lectures.

But the educated Indian gentlemen whose own minds are enlightened by the light of Christianity which has reached them in various ways catch hold of those good sentiments only of the Hindu religion, and seem as if they were not aware of anything else in it, and think Theism is taught in the Hindu religion, and that revelation is not necessary to teach it. The erroneousness of this is shown.

THE LECTURER.

You seo, I am not a foreigner, I am not an Englishman. I am your fellow-countryman, your brother.

I was a Hindu, nay, I can say that I am a Hindu, if we understand by that term a genuine native of India, like yourselves. I was a Brahman, and Benares was my home, though *Maháráshtra desh* has been the country of my forefathers. You know that Benares has been considered a

great seat of Sanskrit learning. It was so in my young days. And though I cannot call myself a learned Pandit, yet, living in Benares, I received some education in Sanskrit, and have acquired some knowledge of the religion and philosophies of our forefathers. I was not acquainted with English in early life, nor did I associate with those who received an English education, and my faith in Hinduism remained undisturbed. For it is the English education, that is now giving new light to our countrymen, which makes them unable to retain their faith in the religion of our forefathers, in the same sense in which our forefathers believed in it, and in which, even now, thousands of our countrymen, who have not received an English education, still believe in it. My faith, I repeat, was firm in the religion of our forefathers, and I even despised Christianity, and thought that it was a religion fitted for the ignorant *mlechchas* only, but that it could never be compared with our philosophies whose doctrines were doctrines of deep wisdom. I was very proud of those philosophies, and I even ventured so far as to undertake the refutation of Christianity. With this object, I began to hold discussions with Missionaries, read some controversial books, gave much attention to the controversy, and even wrote in refutation of Christianity. And so I went on for some years. You will observe then that I was very partial towards my old religion, and very much prejudiced against Christianity. But notwithstanding all this, at last God opened my eyes, and He put this thought into my heart, that Christianity was not such a religion that I should deal with it with such a prejudiced mind, but that I ought to examine it, as well as my own religion, with impartiality, and with a sincere desire to know the truth. When thus God, by his mercy, removed prejudice from my mind, I began to see, at once, that Hinduism could not be a divinely revealed religion, and I soon came to the conclusion that I ought to embrace Christianity. Now, gentlemen, you understand that it is not an easy thing for a Brahman to become a Christian. Nay, it was far more difficult in the year 1848, when I embraced Christianity, than it is now. English education

has brought about a great change, in the minds of men, since then. We, Christians, are respectfully treated now by hundreds of young men every where (who have received an English education) ; and many more men have embraced Christianity since ; and so men are gradually getting accustomed to the idea. It was different forty-four years ago, and especially in such a place as Benares. I assure you it was a very great sacrifice to me to be separated from, and cast out, by my relatives, and to become the object of the greatest ignominy and reproach among all. But it was the force of conviction, and the voice of conscience which showed me that I ought to embrace Christianity, and compelled me to embrace it : God, by his grace, giving me strength and courage to do so. And now, dear Sirs, that which I consider to be the greatest blessing for myself, I cannot help longing with all my heart that my dear countrymen should also partake in. This is my motive, believe me, dear Sirs, in endeavouring now to bring the subject of Christianity before you.

THE SPREAD OF SCIENTIFIC AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE.

You will acknowledge, I supposo, that, by the mercy of God, the times of darkness are passing away from our country, and that light is spreading more and more, under the influence of European learning. How much darkness was there amongst us, in the first place, about physical, scientific, and literary subjects ! Our forefathers did not even know the nature of this earth upon which we live. Not only were they ignorant of other countries, such as Greece, and England, and France, but they did not know even their own country sufficiently. The greatest Pandits entertained such absurd notions as that there was a golden mountain in the north, called *Sumeru*, lakhs of miles in height and breadth, whereas, it is now well-known that the circumference of the earth is not more than about 24,000 miles. The greatest Pandits believed that there were seven oceans, composed of *ghí*, *dahi*, sugar-cane juice, honey, &c. As for the knowledge of history, it did not

exist at all in our country. We had *Puránas* and *Mahá-bhárata* and *Rámáyana*, in the place of history. But there is not one well-educated man now, who considers that these contain any reliable historical statements. Very likely some true facts are mixed with the legends which the *Puránas*, *Mahábhárata* and *Rámáyana* contain. Very likely some of those kings, whose names are mentioned in the royal genealogies, given in those books, were real persons. But no reliance, whatever, can be placed on the stories of them, which are given in those books. There is not time, however, to give a full description of that flood of light, which is now being poured into our country, on physical, scientific, and literary subjects, through the European learning, now introduced by the good providence of God. And, indeed, I am not learned enough to describe it fully. But you will all acknowledge, I suppose, the existence of this flood of light, and I cannot but think that you are rejoicing in it, for you know the great benefit that such a light confers upon men.

RELIGIOUS LIGHT SPREADING.

Now what I wish to say to you, gentlemen, is, that not only on physical, scientific, and literary subjects, is the darkness now passing away, but, thank God, that the deplorable darkness which formerly reigned here, on that most important subject, religion, is also passing away, and a glorious light beginning to shine.

But I know that when I speak of a great darkness about religion reigning in our country, you will be startled. Only the other day, I was talking to an Indian gentleman here on the subject of religion, and he said to me, "Why, is it not enough that we should believe in one God, and worship Him, and obey His commands, and do our duty? And are not these things taught in our religion?"

Ah! these things are indeed taught in your religion, but only in name, and not in reality. You, I know, have got purer notions, now, about one God, and about worshipping Him, and about His commands. But believe me,

dear Sirs, you got these purer nations, not from your religion, but from your English education.

I suppose you are again astonished to hear me say so. But listen to me patiently, and you will see the truth of it. In your religion, the most ancient book, which is considered of the highest authority, and even to be the direct utterance of *Brahma*, is the *Rig-veda*. Now, what does it teach? Does it teach the worship of the one, true God? No, but the worship of fire, called *Agni*, and the worship of wind, called *Váyu*, and the worship of the sun, and other imaginary deities! From that most ancient time, when the *Rig-veda* was composed, down to the present time, the belief, of our poor countrymen, has been, that fire, and wind, and sun, &c., are really gods. Of course, I do not mean those who have received an English education. And I am telling you, not a matter of conjecture, but what I know by my own experience. I told you that I did not know English in my early life. I was, indeed, at that time, a genuine, orthodox Hindu, believing honestly and truly, what I professed to believe. And, I assure you, that I really believed that fire was really a god, and that the sun was really a god, and joining my hands together in great devotion, I prayed to them. And so did my father, and grandfather, and great grandfather believed. So, believed all the great Pandits of Benares, who lived within my memory. So believed the great *Manu*, *Yájñavalkya*, *Vasishtha* and *Viswamitra*. So believed, those men, who composed those hymns of the *Rig-veda*, which contain praises of, and prayers to, fire, wind, the sun, and other imaginary deities. Tell me, I pray you, is it not a most deplorable darkness about religion? But you will ask, "Is there nothing said about, *Iswara*, that is, God, in our religious books?" Well, there is, indeed, a good deal said about *Brahma*, or *Iswara*, and of worshipping him, in your *later* religious books, but not, in your most ancient and most authoritative religious books, the *Sanhitás* and the *Bráhmaṇas*. The worship, taught in them, is the worship of fire, wind, the sun, &c., as I have already told you. Is it not very strange? Can you believe—I ask this question of your

hearts—do your hearts really believe, can they believe, that such books are the true revelation of God? And if these books cannot be the true word of God, then the later books cannot be; for they all proceed on the supposition that these most ancient books, the *Sanhitás* and the *Bráhmaṇas* of the *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Samaveda* are the very utterance of *Brahma*.

WHAT IS RELIGIOUS BELIEF?

Some educated gentlemen profess that they believe in Hinduism. Now, believing in a religion is not simply approving of, and accepting, such things in any religious books as seem to us reasonable and good. In that sense, I may say that I also believe in Hinduism. For I approve of such things in the *Upanishads* and *Mahábhárata* and *Manu-sanhita* as are reasonable and good. But a man, in this case, is not a believer in a religion, as coming from divine authority, but in his own individual judgment and reason, and therefore is not a believer in that religion at all. For to believe in a religion, in the true sense of the word, is to believe that it is really revealed by Almighty God himself, and possesses divine, and therefore, infallible authority. And bear this also in mind, I beseech you, dear Sirs, that a man's belief in the religion which he professes, must be sincere, real, full, unhesitating and from the bottom of his heart. If it is not so, if it consists only in profession of the lips, it is a sham. Such an unreal belief is good for nothing: it cannot do that for which you say that religion is necessary.



SUPPOSED HINDU DOCTRINES.

MONOTHEISM.

The Vedas.

Some are in the habit of instilling into the minds of ignorant men and women the notion that religion in our country began to be gradually corrupted in later days

only, say, from the times of the Puránas, but that Theism was the faith of our forefathers in more ancient times. In "Brahmo Public Opinion" of January 6th of last year, I read the following words: "As we look through the vista of the past, what do we find? That India was of all countries most spiritual in religion. We find the Yogis and Rishis of old buried in deep contemplation in the valleys of the Himálaya, only looking up to the Most High for salvation The primitive religion of India was monotheism, and it was from India that monotheism was transplanted to the west, if we may use the term. But what is the condition of her religion? Where is that pure unadulterated spiritual Theism? Living in a country which was once the seat of the highest and purest form of Theism, we feel ourselves ashamed to ask—Have we made any progress in religion during the past year?" and so on.

Now, gentlemen, I do wish to make a vigorous protest against such language, and I hope our friends will kindly forgive me. I do not wish to bring a charge against them of consciously trying to mislead the ignorant. For, I suppose that somehow they have persuaded themselves of the truth of what they assert, and then mislead others by such statements, without being conscious that they are doing so. But where is the proof, I ask, for such an assertion? The most ancient book of the Hindu religion is the Rig-Veda Sanhita. The first hymn of that book is addressed to fire. It begins thus: "I glorify Agni," that is, fire, "the high priest of the Sacrifice, the divine, the ministrant who presents the oblation (to the gods,) and is the possessor of great wealth. May that Agni who is to be celebrated by both ancient and modern sages conduct the gods hither. Through Agni the worshipper obtains that affluence which increases day, by day, which is the source of fame and the multiplier of mankind. Agni, the unobstructed sacrifice of which thou art on every side the protector, assuredly reaches the gods. May Agni, the presenter of oblation, the attainer of knowledge, he who is true, renowned and divine, come hither with the gods."

Is this "pure unadulterated spiritual Theism?" Tho

writer of that article tells us that the “primitive religion of India was Monotheism.” But this, the oldest book of the Hindu religion, tells us that “both *ancient* and modern sages,” that is, sages who were regarded as ancient as well as those who were modern in the time of the composer of this hymn celebrated Agni, that is the fire-god. Surely the author of that ancient hymn must have been better acquainted with the belief of the Hindu sages of his own time as well as of times more ancient than his, than the writer of that article in the “*Brahmo Public Opinion*.”*

Now the 2nd hymn of the same book is addressed—To whom? To Almighty God? No, but to the wind, called Váyu in the Sanskrit language. It begins thus. “Váyu, pleasant to behold, approach: these libations are prepared for thee, drink of them; hear our invocations.” Thus this most ancient book of the Hindu religion is filled with such hymns from beginning to end, addressed to a variety of objects, real or fabulous, whom not only our most ancient forefathers believed, but all their descendants to this day, even the most learned among them, firmly believe to be gods. I myself, when I was a Hindu, so believed.

Only a passage here and there is supposed to speak of God. For instance, the 121st Súkta of the 10th Mandala, which begins with the words, “Hiranyagarbhasamavartatágre,” is such a passage. But it is not very clear whether it speaks of the true God, or only of one of the Vedic gods, called Prajapati. It is true that very high attributes are ascribed to him, but in other hymns of the Rig-Veda, some very high attributes are ascribed to other gods also, such as Varuna, or Indra. Professor Max Müller says: “It would be easy to find, in the numerous hymns of the Veda, passages in which almost every single god is represented as supreme and absolute.”† Dr. John Muir, in his “Sanskrit Texts,” speaking of the Vedic god Vishnu, says, that “Some of the

* In several other hymns of the Rig-Veda reference is made to *ancient* sages as the worshippers of Agni and other Vedic gods.

† History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature. Page 533.

highest divine functions and attributes are also assigned to Vishnu; and we might thus be led to suppose that the authors of these hymns regarded him as the supreme Deity. But this supposition is invalidated by the fact that Indra is sometimes associated with Vishnu in the performance of these functions, and that several other deities are magnified in terms of similar import.”* If again you look at that famous 129th Sūkta of the same Mandala, which begins with the words “Násadásit” it only shows how vague, imperfect, and uncertain, were the ideas of God entertained by the authors of those ancient hymns, supposing that that hymn speaks of God. It says some things in such an obscure language that we cannot learn any thing definite from it, and then it puts certain questions, and, according to its obvious sense, it leaves the matter in uncertainty, “He knows or [even] He does not know.”† If we would take Sáyana’s explanation, then this hymn teaches the most developed doctrine of the Vedánt, the doctrine of advaita which, as I said, is not Theism, but the very opposite of it.

But even granting that in a passage here and there this most ancient book of the Hindu religion does speak of God, yet that will not prove that it teaches Theism. Is it because a passage here and there appears to speak of God? Then why is not the Hinduism of to-day considered still more monotheistic? Surely God is far more unmistakably set forth in modern books than in the hymns of the Rig-Veda.

The most ignorant idolaters will tell you, if you will ask them, that there is only one God, that is, the Supreme Being, and they will never say that there is more than one God. But if any one would say that the Hindus of the present time worship many gods also though they may acknowledge that there is only one God, and that they worship idols, and therefore they cannot be monotheists; then I would

* Muir’s *Sanskrit Texts*, Preface, Vol. iv. p. 7.

† सो अङ्गवेद यदि वा न वेद ।

ask, Was not the same the case with the authors of those ancient hymns of the Rig-Veda? They may have spoken sometimes here and there of God, but the chief objects of their devotion were Agni, Váyu, Indra, and many other real or imaginary beings. And does the worship of a god in an idol appear to any one worse than the worship of fire and wind? Why so? Because idols seem to be very mean things, but fire and wind are grander and finer elements? Then such a one ought not to find much fault with any that worships gods in images made of gold and silver.

We, then, all believed that there was only one God, and called Him Omnipotent, Omniscient and so on, and learned writers of our most modern philosophical and religious books propound elaborate arguments to prove the existence of such a God, and yet we, and they, worshipped, at the same time, a multitude of gods also. It is then really incomprehensible to me why any one should say that there is monotheism in the Rig-Veda, because in some rare passages of it God seems to be spoken of, and why he should not think that there is monotheism in all, even the most modern, books of Hinduism, and why he should not call every Hindu a monotheist?

THE UPANISHADS.

Now I come to the Upanishads,* and those who talk of India being "once the seat of the highest and purest form of Theism," have generally the Upanishads in their minds. But the Upanishads do not contain Theism.

Now as regards the teaching of the Upanishads, first of all you must know that they recognize the authority of the Rig-Veda, the Yajurveda, and the Sámaveda, and also the lawfulness of those rites in which the multitude of the Vedic gods are invoked and worshipped. Nay, those gods are invoked in the Upanishads themselves. The Taittiríya

* Orthodox Hindus believe the Upanishads to be a part of the Vedas. The quotations in them from the Rig-Veda Sanhita as well as their language prove them to belong to a much later age than that of the Rig-Veda Sanhita.

begins with the invocation : "Shánno Mitrah Shamvarunah " and so on.* And then it addresses the Vedic god Váyu, and says " 'Thou art Brahma." In two of the Upanishads, Agni is invoked by the verse of the Rig-Veda, "Agne naya supathá ráye asman," and so on. "O Agni, lead us, by a good road, to wealth." Again, the very upásanás, or devotions, prescribed in them are directed towards objects which are parts of those ceremonies of the Vedas in which the Vedic gods are worshipped. Now can he be a Theist who recognizes the lawfulness of ceremonies in which the multitude of the Vedic gods are worshipped, nay, who himself invokes them ? The Brahmos indeed select some expressions from the Upanishads, which, when taken by themselves, are capable of being interpreted in a Theistic sense, and of being used as theistic expressions. But has any pundit, who has not been enlightened, like the Brahmos, by the light which they have received from another source, ever been able to extract from the Upanishads pure Theism ?

But you may ask, Is there nothing taught about Brahma the Upanishads ? Yes, there is, but their teaching about Brahma is not Theistic. They teach the advaita doctrine of the Vedánta, that is, monism. Their teaching is that Brahma is everything, that our own átmás or souls are Brahma. In the Vedánta system, strange to say, while it is held that every thing is Brahma, and that our souls are Brahma, the belief in a God, maker of all, the ruler of all, Omnipotent, Omniscient, is also maintained. Let this however be ever remembered that though the Upanishads speak of God as the maker and ruler of all, Omnipotent, Omniscient, &c., yet that does not prove that their true doctrine is not advaita or monism. For Shankaráchárya and all other writers on Vedánta, who undoubtedly taught the advaita doctrine or monism, speak of a God, maker and ruler of all, Omnipotent, Omniscient, &c., and enjoin the duty of exercising bhakti or devotion towards Him.

* "May Mitra be auspicious to us, may Varuna be auspicious, may Aryaman be auspicious to us, may Indra, may Brihaspati be auspicious to us, may the wide-striding Vishnu be auspicious to us." This occurs in the Rig-Veda Samhita i. 90, 9.

"One only without a Second."

It is related in the Chhándogya Upanishad that a youth, by name Shvetaketu, went by the advice of his father to a teacher to study under him. After spending twelve years, as was customary, with the teacher, when he returned home, he appeared rather elated. Him the father asks: "Hast thou asked (of thy teacher) for that instruction by which what is not heard becomes heard, what is not perceived becomes perceived, what is not known becomes known?" Shvetaketu requests his father to explain to him how that instruction is capable of imparting such a knowledge. Then the father tries to explain it, first, by several illustrations. This is one of them: "As by knowing one lump of earth all that is made of earth would become known. The thing made of it is a name only, something for the speech to rest upon, in reality it is nothing but earth." Then, after adding some other illustrations, he says, "So is, meek one, that instruction." Now these illustrations have already intimated that as the earthen things are made of the lump of earth, and are one with it, and therefore are known by knowing the lump of earth, so the universe springs from the essence of Brahma, and is one, substantially one, with it. But at the request of Shvetaketu the father immediately proceeds to set forth the doctrine clearly. First he says: "This was the Existent One itself before, one only with a second." "This" means "this universe, developed in names, forms and acts," as Shankarácharya says, commenting upon this text. This is a well-known phrase in the Upanishads. As in the sentence in the Brihadáran-yaka: "This then was verily at the time undeveloped ;" plainly referring by "this" to the present developed universe. So then the meaning of our text is that "this" universe, "before" it was developed in the present form "was the Existent One," i.e., Brahma, "itself." And the words "one only without a second"* denote the non-existence of any other entity besides Brahma, with which the

* एकमेवाद्वितीयम् ।

now developed universe is identified. So then it sets forth the Vedánta doctrine that there is only one entity, denying that there is any other thing. It denies *dvaita*, or duality, and inculcates the *advaita* doctrine, or monism. It does not teach, as the Brahmos would make us believe, that there is no other god besides the one God. Though therefore the Brahmos use these words in their devotions to express a Theistic idea, yet they do not really express that idea. And it is from sheer ignorance that some bring forward these words with the intention of showing that the Upanishads teach Theism.

CREATION.

Our forefathers believed that there was a God, but they did not believe Him to be the creator of all. For by the word "Creator" Christians as well as Theists mean One Who gave being to things which had no being before, or according to the phrase used in Christian Theology, created things out of nothing. In this sense no sect of religion or school of philosophy among the Hindus believes God to have created anything.

And here I wish to say that such of our countrymen as have been educated in English Schools and Colleges, and are not familiar with the true tenets of Hinduism are apt to be misled by certain words and phrases used in the religious books of our country. They are apt to think that these words and phrases were used by the authors of those books, and are understood by Orthodox Hindus, in the same sense which they themselves attach to them, having acquired more enlightened notions of religious truths by coming in contact with Christianity, and then to think that those very notions are taught in those books. For instance it is stated in those books that God is *Sarva-kartá*, that is, maker of all. Yet it would be a great mistake to think that they teach that God is the *creator* of all things. It is a fixed principal with the teachers of all the schools of philosophy in our country (and remember that with the Hindus philosophy is religion and religion is philosophy) that every *Kárya*,

that is effect, must have a *Samaráyi* or *Upádána Kārana*, that is a cause out of which an effect is produced or formed, such as clay is to an earthen pot. It may be translated by the English words "material cause" in some cases, though not in all. Therefore the world could not be created out of nothing. According to the Hindus' belief the world has an *Upádána Kārana*, or a material cause, and that material cause is uncreated, self-existing, and eternal, like God Himself. According to the *Nyáya* School the *paramāṇus*, or atoms of earth, water, fire and air, which are infinite in number, are the material cause of the visible and tangible parts of this universe, and are themselves self-existent and eternal. Moreover, *Ākāśa*,* time, space, souls, not only of men, but also of gods, animals, and plants, and *manas*, the internal organs which together with souls are infinite in number, are all uncreated, self-existent, and eternal. Very little indeed have they left for God to do. He only frames with these self-existent substances this world. According to the Sāṅkhya system *prakṛiti* is the material cause of the universe, and it is of course self-existent and eternal.

These philosophical systems are however more or less heterodox from the stand-point of Orthodox Hinduism. The Vedānt philosophy is unquestionably the true exponent of Orthodox Hinduism. For its most essential doctrine, namely, the tenet of *advaita*, or monism, which teaches that our souls and Brahma are one, is unquestionably the teaching of Hindu Scriptures. And that philosophy must be considered Orthodox, from the stand-point of Hinduism, which upholds the tenets taught in the Hindu Scriptures.

* The idea of *Ākāśa* is peculiar to the Hindu Religion and therefore this word cannot be translated in any other language. To describe it briefly, it is in all respects like space except that it is believed to possess the quality of sound, and to be the *Samaráyi Kārana* thereof. It is considered to be one, and the last, of the five elements. As air has tangibility; fire, that and color; water, these and taste; earth, all these and smell; so *ākāśa* has sound alone as its quality. It is infinite in dimension, not made up of parts, and eternal. But for its supposed quality of sound it might have been taken for a vacuum, yet English writers attempt to translate it into English. But this is one instance how English translations of Sanskrit words and works are misleading.

Therefore the great majority of the professors of Hinduism are followers of the Vedánta system, both learned as well as unlearned. I too, as an Orthodox Hindu, was, from my forefathers, an adherent of the same system. Now in this Vedánta system also, God, or I'shwara, is not a *creator*. Indeed, according to its teaching, the true state is that there is only one true entity and that is Brahma. Every thing else is false. It never was, nor does it exist, nor will exist. So then according to the true state, called the *paramásthika dashá*, nothing could be created. But they have to account for the apparent existence of this world, seen and felt and acknowledged by all. They have therefore invented a theory of different kinds of existence. They are called *páramásthika Sattá*, *vyávahárika Sattá* and *prátibhásika Sattá*. Of these three the first alone is, they say, the really true existence, the other two are false, and are only imagined as true by men through ignorance, *ajnána*. They say then that the world and all things and all transactions in it exist according to the *vyávahárika Sattá*, or an untrue kind of existence. There is however this great absurdity in the Vedánta system that what they call a false existence they at the same time consider to be a real existence of some sort. This subject will be most bewildering to all who are not brought up in the Vedánta notions, and my advice to all such is to let it alone and not to speculate about it. But to return to the subject: according to the same kind of existence, the false existence, there is, say the Vedántists, a God, or I'shwara, who made the world. Let it be kept in mind that in the Vedánta there is a distinction between Brahma, and I'shwara, or God. Brahma is in reality the only true entity, every thing besides it (Brahma is in neuter gender) is an unreality. This Brahma is *nirguna*, that is, void of qualities or attributes, and *nishkriya*, inactive; it does nothing. I'shwara, that is, God, is possessed of the attributes of Omnipotence, Omniscience, &c. He is the maker of the world. But he himself together with the world, is, as I said, false having only that false existence, the *vyávahárika Sattá*, imagined by ignorance. But even this false god of theirs, the maker of the false world, is only a

framer of it, like the God of the Nyáya system, and not a creator, Máya being the *upádána Káрана*, or material cause of it. From this Máya, though false yet eternal, the whole universe is evolved, as according to the Sánkhyā it is evolved from their eternal *prakriti*. Though this word *prakriti* is appropriated by the Sánkhyā, yet it belongs to Orthodox Hinduism. In it Máya and *prakriti* are the same thing. And not only is this Máya eternal but these six categories are, according to the Vedānta system, eternal, "Souls, I'shwara, the puro Brahma," (for there is a difference, as I said, between I'shwara and the pure Brahma) "the distinction between souls and I'shwara, avidyā," that is, Máya, "and the junction of Máya and Brahma—these six are with us," they say, "eternal."* This is the teaching of the Vedānta, the expounder of Orthodox Hinduism. And though other founders of heterodox sects, like Rámanuja, Mádhwa and others, have rejected the great tenet of the Vedānta, namely the identity of soul with Brahma, yet they agree with all the other religious systems of our country in not holding God to be the Creator in the Christian and Theistic sense of the word. So you see, gentlemen, before I learnt this truth from Christianity, I had not known, I had not believed, that God was a *Creator*.

I was once told by a gentleman belonging to the educated class, that though learned men among the Hindus did not believe in the true idea of creation, because they were misled by their speculations in which learned men are tempted to indulge, yet since the belief that God created all things is natural to man, it is entertained by men naturally, if they do not allow that natural conception to be corrupted by fallacious speculations. Ask, therefore, he said, any ignorant peasant, or a common kuli, and he will tell you that God created all things. But I say that if that natural

* जीव ईशो विशुद्धा चित् तथा जीवेशयोर्भिदा ।

अविद्या तच्चित्तोर्योगः षडस्माकमनादयः ।

This couplet is well-known to all educated Vedāntists, and is quoted in standard Vedānta books.

or intuitive conception of creation still exists in men, it is very strange that no school of religious opinions that has flourished in our great country should have retained it, but that all should have corrupted it by their speculations, and yet that Christians should have preserved that notion unchanged, and also that the Brahmos, after they have come in contact with the light of Christianity, should begin to adopt the same belief.

But it is not true that the ignorant peasant or a common kuli has the true idea of creation. If you ask such a one "Who made all things?" He will indeed answer, "God." But in this vague answer to a vague question his language and that of the learned Hindus will be the same. Therefore that decides nothing. But if you ask a learned Hindu or any Hindu tolerably acquainted with the teaching of his religion, this definite question: "Did God make the world out of some pre-existing material or without it?" He will answer "Out of a pre-existing material most certainly." But if you put the same question to an utterly ignorant man he will answer: "O Sir, that I do not know." I have asked such a question of an ignorant man and have received such a reply. You cannot therefore say that ignorant men possess the true notion of creation. The reason why an ignorant man would not tell you of his own accord that God made the world out of some pre-existing material is that his thoughts never go so far, he being unable to use his thoughts about such a subject. But there is no reason to suppose that he possesses the true notion of creation either explicitly or implicitly. For let a learned pundit tell him that God made the world out of the pre-existing *Prakriti* or *Máyá*, and he will at once accept the tenet, without feeling any contradiction to any sentiment implicitly entertained by him in his heart.

But of what use is the case of an ignorant and unthinking peasant to you and to me? Would you or I prefer to have remained ignorant? But if we would prefer to have been educated and cultivated we could not have restrained ourselves from thinking of such subjects. And then unless we had got light from revelation we could not but have fallen

into the same erroneous notions about the relation of God with His creatures into which every individual of cultivated mind in this country has fallen. Nay, even the Prārthanásamájists in the Maratha country who, like the Brahmos, have given up Hinduism, and profess to believe in pure Theism, are not agreed on this point. Several leading and learned members of that community with whom I, and a friend of mine, had conversations on this subject have told us that they do not believe that God created the universe without a material cause.

To resume then the subject ; I did not know, when I was a Hindu, this very first article of the Theistic creed. As an orthodox Hindu, believing in what the Hindu Scriptures taught, I believed, in the first place, that in reality and truth the world had no existence, but that it was false, and that therefore nothing was created or made by any body. But in the next place, I held that according to the *vyāvahārika* or untrue, state, conceived through ignorance, the world had an existence, a false existence, and that it was evolved out of Mâyá by Ishwara. Such was my firm belief and the belief of my forefathers. And if I had not learnt it from Christianity, I could never have known, as none of our countrymen, learned or unlearned has ever known, this very first article of the Theistic creed, that God has created all things without any pre-existing material cause.

GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE.

I proceed to tell you what is the teaching of the Hindu Shástras about another great attribute of God, namely, His infinite Power, or Omnipotence. God is certainly called *Sarvashakti*, that is Almighty, in those books. But this term also as found in them does not express the same notion of the Omnipotence of God as you think it to express. For as I have told you, according to all the schools of religion among the Hindus there are substances and beings, and amongst them our own souls, that are self-existent, and eternal, not created by God. And so the essence and existence of those innumerable self-existent substances and

beings, being independent of God's will and power, are not under the control of His power. His power does not extend to them. And so they put a limit to it. So you see that though God is called *Sarvashakti* or Almighty in the religious books of the Hindus, yet they have not a true notion of His Almightiness.

GOD'S MERCY.

Again, have they a true notion of God's attribute of mercy? God is called *dayálu*, that is, merciful, in the religious books of the Hindus, and it is a title of God with which our countrymen are very familiar. And yet, if we will consider another very fundamental doctrine of Hindu religion, this word, *dayálu* will appear but an empty sound. What do you understand by *dayá*, or mercy? Is it not doing good to some one without his meriting it? But it is a fundamental principle of all schools of religion among the Hindus that every thing that God does to souls He does with reference to their good and evil deeds only, in order that they may receive reward for good deeds, and suffer for their evil deeds, and He never does any thing irrespectively of the good and evil deeds of souls. "Of every effect" that is, of every thing that takes place, says the author of *Tarkamrita*, "these are the common causes, namely, God, His knowledge, His will, His activity, *brágabhára*," that is, antecedent non-existence, "time, space, and deserts of souls." So you see that not only God, His will, and so forth, but desert of souls is also necessary for every thing that takes place. Thus even the production of a jar by a potter is ascribed to the desert of souls. The author of the *Vedánta Paribhashá* says that "According to the works," that is, good or bad deeds, "of souls there arise in *Máyá* which is the *upádhi* of Ishwara, i.e., which distinguishes Him from Brahma on the one hand and from souls on the other, and which serves for His antahkarana, or mind, "such resolves as, this is now to be created, this is now to be cared for, this is now to be done away."

The familiar expression "*kritahánákritábhyágamaprasangát*" is used to express this very fundamental principle

of the Hindu religion. It means that if a soul should not obtain what he has merited, and should get what he has not merited, "there would ensue the effacement of what is done, and the accession of what is not done."

As I do not know enough of the Vaishnava Sects called Rámánujas, Mádhwas, &c., I inquired of a very learned Rámánuja Pundit in Benares whether his system also inculcated the principle that God never does any thing irrespectively of the works of souls, and he told me that it did, although I had already been persuaded in my mind that it would.

When therefore you hear it said that God shows mercy to such as take refuge with Him, and exercise *bhakti* (devotion) towards Him, you should understand that the truth is simply this; taking refuge with God and exercising *bhakti* towards Him consists in certain acts. The acts of *bhakti* are such as repeating the names of Krishna, Ráma, &c., and reading their stories, singing their songs, going on pilgrimage to Mathurá, Ayodhyá, &c., and such like. And it is by the *merit* of such acts that God is made propitious and favourable to those who perform those acts. Therefore in the Vedánta-sára, *upásaná* or devotion is put down along with other meritorious works called *nitya*, *naimittika*, and *práyashchitta*, which are all supposed to have the efficacy of purging a man's sin and of purifying his intellect and thus making him capable of receiving *Jnána* that is, the knowledge of the true nature of his own self, whereby alone he can obtain salvation. And this is the only way in which *bhakti* as well as other meritorious acts subserve in procuring salvation for man. Neither *bhakti* nor any thing else is, according to the teaching of Hinduism, the direct cause of salvation. *Jnána* alone is held to be such a cause. So you see that when we examine thoroughly the tenets of the Hindu Shastras it becomes clear that, according to their teaching, there is no such thing as God's showing favour to any one without his meriting it, and therefore I said that though God is called *dayálu*, that is, merciful, in them yet, that word in them is but an empty sound.

Moreover, according to their teaching the effects of the

works called *Prárabdhakarma* cannot be effaced by any thing, not even by *juána*, i.e., the right apprehension of one's own soul, which effaces the effects of all other works, much less by God's mercy. They have a well-known saying: "प्रारब्धकर्मणां भोगादेव क्षयः" One cannot get rid of the *prárabdhakarm* except by enjoying (if good) or enduring (if bad) its effects." This also shows that there is no mercy of God in Hindu *Shástras*.

THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

I will speak next about the doctrine of the Holiness of God. The Hindus have not got a true idea of this attribute of God. This becomes very clear from this, that they, even the most learned among them, believe that Krishna was the Supreme God himself Incarnate, and believe also that He could commit such unholy acts as are related of Krishna. The great Shankarácharya fully believed that Krishna was the true God incarnate from Vesudeva and Devaki, as he expressly says in the introduction of his commentary on the *Bhagavadgítá*. A very learned writer on the Nyáya philosophy in the first verse of his *kárikávali* offers adoration to Krishna as the supreme Being, ascribing to him these two characteristics at once, he calls him the cause of the universe,* and also "the stealer of the clothes of the young Gopis" when they were bathing naked in the river Yamuna.†

And let no one suppose that the account of those lustful acts of Krishna, related in five chapters of the tenth book of the *Bhágavata*, is susceptible of being understood in a figurative or mystical sense. The plain statement such as the following can never be taken in any other than its most obvious literal sense.

* Literally "The seed of the tree of the universe."

† His words are संसारमहोदहस्य बीजाय and गोपवधूटीदुकूलचोराय ।

“बाहुप्रसारपरिरम्भकरालकोरुनीवीस्तनालम्बननर्मनखाग्रपातैः क्षे-
 लावलोकहसितैर्व्रजसुन्दरीणामुत्तम्भयन् रतिपतिं रमयाञ्चकार ।” The
 last words of this verse are thus explained by the pious, and
 learned commentator, Shridharaswámi, “कामं तासामुद्दीपयन्-
 स्तारमयाञ्चकार ।” “exciting their lust, he caused them to
 enjoy themselves!” So that there can be no doubt about
 the plain meaning of the whole verse.

But is it not said, some one may ask, in the religious
 books of our country that God is Holy? Certainly it is.
 In the book called Vishnu-Sahasranáma, Vishnu is called
 “holy of holies,”* that is most holy. Nay, in this very
 book of the Bhágavata it will be found in many places that
 God is called pure and holy, and by many other sublime
 names. But that is just what I said that though such words
 are used in the religious books of this country yet the
 authors of those books, as well as the readers of them did
 not entertain the same pure and correct notions which those
 words now convey to you. They indeed applied the word,
páwitra, or Holy to God, yet nevertheless they had no
 correct notion of the Holiness of God.

But I give you a positive proof also to show that the
 authors of the Upanishads had no more correct notion of
 holiness than the authors of the Bhágavata and other later
 books. I have already told you of an upásaná, or devotion,
 prescribed in the Chhándogya Upanishad, a very ancient
 Upanishad, and told you that the object towards which it
 is directed is so obscene that it must not be mentioned in
 a public assembly. Now I will tell you something more
 about it. Each of the various upásanás prescribed in that
 portion of the Chhándogya, has a vrata, that is, a vow, at-
 tached to it, which the performer of that upásaná has to
 observe. Now the vow attached to this strange upásaná
 is that he who performs it should never reject any women
 that may come to him! The venerable commentator, Shan-

karáchárya, commenting upon this passage, says " Since this act is prescribed by Scripture, as a part of this upásaná, other Scriptures forbidding such acts must be understood as forbidding them under other circumstances, but not when done as a part of this upásaná. Since we learn duty from the authority of Scripture, there can be no contradiction between this Scripture and other Scriptures forbidding such acts." The learned scholiast upon Shankara's commentary, Ánandagiri, unfolds his meaningsaying ; " The two scriptures should be thus understood : one, as prescribing a particular act, and the other, as forbidding such acts in general ; and then there will be no contradiction. Moreover, since from Scripture alone we know our duty, and since Scripture here prescribes this act, it becomes a duty, though a bad act. And further, this act is prescribed by the Veda [for the Upanishads are believed to be a part of the Veda] whereas the Scripture which *forbids* such acts is Smriti. But Smriti, being an inferior authority, cannot oppose the injunction of the Veda."* O dear Sirs, would that you, who are born and brought up in the light which Christianity has spread here for many years, could be made to understand and believe what darkness reigns in the heart of those who have never come in contact with that light, though they may be learned philosophers.

The following instance though not taken from the Upanishads will show you that a corrupt morality is not confined to the religion of the Puránas, but is found in the Vedic religion also. The Shadvinsha Bráhmāna of the Sáma Veda is of the same authority as the Upanishads, and belongs to the same class of literature to which the Upanishads belong. Most of the Upanishads are parts of the Bráhmāna ; and though one portion of the Bráhmāna is occupied with prescribing ceremonies, and the Upanishad portion does not do so, yet it must never be supposed that the authors of those different portions differed in their sentiments from one another. For, as I have shown in my last lecture, the lawfulness of those ceremonial acts is admitted in the Upani-

* See the words of Shankara and Anandagiri on that passage of the Chhándogya. Pages 124 125, Vol. iii. of the Bibliotheca Indica.

shads; the vory upásanás or devotions prescribed in the Chhándogya and the Brihadáranyaka Upanishads being directed towards objects which are parts of those ceremonies. I have also shewn that the gods worshipped in those ceremonies are invoked in the Upanishads themselves. There is no reason therefore to suppose that the writers of the Upanishad portions of the Bráhmaṇas differed in their opinions from, or were more enlightened than, the writers of those portions which prescribe ceremonial acts. Now this Shadvinsha Bráhmaṇa of the Sāma Veda prescribes a ceremony in which the god Indra is to be invoked in these words, "O adulterous lover of Ahalya!"* Now, that the Veda should prescribe the worship of a god who is believed to be an adulterer itself indicates a terrible corruption of the moral sense, but what is still more terrible is the fact that this god is to be invoked by those words as by an endearing appellation, and so this act of his adultery is supposed to be a matter of glory to him! Men whose moral sense was corrupted in such a manner could not have had proper notions of holiness.

DUTY TO GOD.

It can be shewn also that the Hindus have very inadequate notions of our duty towards God. Since Christianity has taught me that God gave me my very being, I have begun to acknowledge that my obligation of worshipping, honouring and loving Him would not cease as long as I had my being. So our Scriptures also expressly teach us. The holy Psalmist says: "Praise the Lord, O my soul. While I live I will praise the Lord. I will sing praises unto my God *while I have any being.*" I, as a Christian, have been taught to believe that to love and glorify God is the very end of my existence. In this will consist my eternal joy and happiness. Not so was my faith when I was a Hindu. The state of salvation, according to my belief at that time, was to be free from transmigration,

* अहल्यायै नमः ।

and to be separated, not only from the body, but even from the antahkarana, which is the organ* of all our thoughts and consciousness, and to remain unconscious for ever. Indeed the teaching of the Vedánta, which represents the orthodox view, and which I followed, is, that souls, when saved, become Brahma itself, and of course lose their individual consciousness.† So then according to the teaching of the Vedánta as well as according to all other ancient schools of religion among the Hindus, worship of God is only possible until one obtains salvation. Indeed, the very object of worshipping God is that one may obtain salvation, which however is not obtained directly from worship, the direct causes of salvation being *jnána*, that is, the right apprehension of the true nature of one's own soul. Worship of God is only a means of obtaining *jnána*. But when through that *jnána* one has attained to the state of salvation he shall have nothing to do with the worship of God thenceforth and for ever.

Men's instinct however, sometimes leads them to think and to utter words directly contrary to their principles and belief, I give you an instance of this with regard to the subject in question. The book called Srimadbhágavata is eminently a book of what we call bhakti or devotion and love to God. Of course the bhakti of the Bhágavata is not directed towards the true God, but towards Vishnu and his incarnation Krishna, whom the author of that book believed, as we all believed, to be God. But its language, so full of bhakti, charms me even now. Would that the author of it had been a Christian, and that he had devoted his tenth book to relating the sublime and holy acts of Khrishta ‡ instead of Krishna, then he would

* So it is called in the decoptive language of the Sáukhya and the Vedánta, but in reality it is not an organ but the seat, the subject of consciousness, &c. I have shown this in my book on Hindu Philosophies.

† Indeed the Brahma of the Vedántists has no consciousness, though in their deceptive language the very definition of Brahma is "existence, intelligence and joy." This also I have shown in my book referred to in the last note.

‡ The blessed Name "Christ" is thus pronounced in the languages of India. According to the Marathi pronunciation the second "h" should be omitted.

have given us a most valuable book indeed. See now what he says with regard to the state of salvation as believed by him and by all his co-religionists :

“ But some there are, rare souls, who plunge themselves
In the vast nectar-ocean of Thy deeds,
And thus deliverance win from every ill,
Thou who to show to men the mystery
Of the soul's nature, hard to comprehend,
A body dost assume, These all have left
Their habitations, drawn by strong desire
Of blest communion with the happy band,
Which, like the geese around the lotus beds,
Hovers around Thy feet, and *quit the love*
E'en of salvation, wholly lost in Thee.”

Here his instinct led him for a moment to see the worthlessness of that miserable state which they call salvation, for there is no scope for the exercise of that bhakti (love and devotion to God) which the bhaktas so much delight in. But let no one think that such sudden and transient flashes of instinctive feeling were sufficient to extricate men from the grossest errors about religious truths. For what is the “ vast nectar-ocean of Thy deeds ” referred to in this verse ? It is those very licentious sportings of Krishna with the Gopis related in this very tenth book of the Bhagavata from which I have quoted this verse and upon which the author has lavished so profusely his poetical genius, and alas ! his devotional sentiments too. And while he here, led by his instinct, inconsistently disparages the state of salvation taught by the Hindu Scriptures, the aim of his whole book is to teach men the means of obtaining that salvation, and to exhort them to strive to obtain it. In this very hymn from which I have quoted the above verse, Vishnu is praised as the giver of salvation in the last verse but one.

“ Because Thou art the giver of Salvation,
Possessor of the highest attributes,
Daily received into the heart through hearing
Of doctrine handed down from age to age.”

How can an orthodox teacher of Hinduism, like the author of the Srimadbhāgavata, consistently despise that

state which is set forth in the Hindu Scriptures as the highest state to be attained by men, by all the religious acts and austerities they can perform, not only in one life but in many lives?

The modern sects called Rámánujas, Mádhvas, &c., differ indeed from the ancient systems of our country in their notion of the state of salvation. They hold, as I heard from Rámánuja and Mádhva pundits in Benares, that souls in the state of salvation will dwell in the abode of Vishnu, retaining their consciousness. In this respect their notion is an improvement upon that of the older systems of Nyáya, Sánkhyā and Vedānta. But those sects are very inconsistent. They profess to accept the Hindu Scriptures as of divine authority, and yet inculcate tenets contradictory to their teaching. For instance, the Rámánujas, and Madhvas profess to venerate the Bhágavata very much, yet see how their notion of salvation differs from that of the Bhágavata. The author of the Bhágavata, led by his natural instinct for a moment, disparages the state of salvation, because according to his doctrine there is no scope for bhakti in that state. But the Vaishnavas, rejecting the orthodox notion about that state, have adopted one according to which there is a scope for the exercise of bhakti in that state, and so the ground for disparaging it is taken away.

CONCLUDING APPEAL.

The Mhow lecture ends with an earnest appeal to attend to religion. Space permits only the solemn question of the Lord Jesus Christ to be quoted:

"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Let the reader accept His gracious invitation:

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

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